Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly admits Republic of Palau as 185th Member State of United Nations; President Nakamura says his country's independence represents victory for principle of self-determination.

+ Vice-President of Rwanda, in address to Security Council, appeals for international help in dealing with armed elements intimidating and killing Rwandese refugees in Zaire.

+ Secretary-General welcomes former United States President Carter's efforts in relation to former Yugoslavia.

+ Bosnian Serbs agree to clear UNPROFOR flights for troop rotation and to ease restrictions on convoy movement through checkpoints.

+ Development is primary imperative of our time, but United Nations has to respond to crisis after crisis in maintaining peace and security, Secretary-General tells Harvard University.

+ Secretary-General recommends Security Council extend UNFICYP mandate for six months; says Force's presence is indispensable to maintenance of Cyprus cease-fire.

+ Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, concluding work for current session, approves draft resolutions on human rights in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

+ DPI launches new series of blue books with publication on United Nations role in struggle against apartheid.

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The General Assembly today admitted the Republic of Palau as the 185th Member State of the United Nations. The country's admission represented the culmination of the United Nations trusteeship system established at the end of the Second World War.

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For information media—not an official record

Addressing the Assembly, the President of Palau, Kuniwo Nakamura, said his country's independence and admission to the United Nations represented a victory for the principle of self-determination. Palau's young constitutional democracy must now focus on building economic self-sufficiency, which was an essential component of true sovereignty. Natural resources were its best foundation for developing a strong economy. He noted that Palau's Declaration of Independence pledged to preserve its marine environment as a "living treasure" for the entire planet.

Also today, the Assembly called on the United Nations to coordinate its efforts and to cooperate with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the pacific settlement of disputes and the maintenance of international peace and security in Africa. In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly encouraged the United Nations and its Member States to help the OAU to strengthen its conflict resolution capacity.

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Rwanda today appealed to the international community for assistance in disarming and relocating "uniformed, armed killers that were intimidating and killing Rwandese refugees" in Zaire who wished to return home. In an address to the Security Council, the Vice-President and Minister of Defence of Rwanda, Major-General Paul Kagame, also asked for international assistance to address the question of impunity.

Major-General Kagame said former Rwandese government leaders, who were continuing to mislead Rwandese refugees in neighbouring countries, were being strengthened by international assistance that was "almost blindly directed to them through inconsistent international policies" and violations of the rules that governed activities of United Nations agencies.

He urged the international community "to help the Rwandese people help themselves". Peace and stability in Rwanda and the region would depend on what the international community could do and how swiftly it could do it. Sending the right message to the criminals and addressing the problem of immunity was the best solution of all, he added.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) today completed its security operation in two camps housing displaced persons in the south-west of the country, according to a spokesman for the Organization. Forty-seven persons suspected of criminal activity were detained, registered and turned over to Government authorities, and 1,000 weapons were seized.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed former United States President Jimmy Carter's efforts in relation to the situation in the former Yugoslavia. He said Mr. Carter was conscious of the need for such efforts to be fully synchronized with those of the Secretary-General's Special

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Representative, as well as those of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia and the Contact Group, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and possible contradictions.

The former President telephoned the Secretary-General yesterday evening to inform him of his contacts with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, and undertook to keep him informed about any further developments. The Secretary-General also spoke yesterday with United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the same subject.

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Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic has agreed to clear United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) flights for the purpose of troop rotation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a spokesman for the Organization. He took that action after Special Representative Yasushi Akashi warned him that UNPROFOR operations would be shut down if freedom of movement problems were not resolved. Two UNPROFOR aircraft were expected to fly in today or tomorrow, weather permitting.

At a meeting with the Special Representative in Pale yesterday, Mr. Karadzic also agreed to drop restrictions on armoured personnel carriers accompanying United Nations convoys, and to ease restrictions on movement through checkpoints, the spokesman said. The Bosnian Serbs today returned three hijacked Dutch fuel tankers -- minus their fuel -- and promised to return two Dutch jeeps that had been stolen.

The spokesman said Mr. Akashi had also protested the continued shelling of Bihac and discussed his proposal for a comprehensive cease-fire agreement. Meanwhile, fighting around Bihac continued today, with sporadic shelling in Velika Kladusa. A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoy trying to get into the pocket was blocked by Croatian Serbs.

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The United Nations is frustrated in its effort to make long-term progress on development because it is required to deal with crisis after crisis and confrontation after confrontation, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He told Harvard University yesterday that the Organization was forced to focus on peace-keeping, even though development was "the primary imperative of our time".

Multilateral operations through the United Nations were the most effective way of maintaining peace, he went on to say. That was particularly true now that conflicts within States were more common than wars between them. However, the effectiveness of multilateralism was difficult to demonstrate without adequate financial and material support. Until those requirements were addressed, the Organization would have great difficulty in performing the tasks entrusted to it.

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States must learn to use the United Nations to handle the new forms of conflict, the Secretary-General stressed. Only when that was done could development be given the proper attention. "In development, lies our greatest hope for moving the world towards enduring peace and prosperity", he concluded.

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The Security Council should extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for six months to 30 June 1995, according to the Secretary-General. In a report dated 12 December, he said the Force's presence remained indispensable to the maintenance of the cease-fire and law and order on the island.

In the last six months, UNFICYP had carried out its functions effectively with the cooperation of both sides, and the situation had remained generally quiet, he continued. However, there was only a cease-fire in Cyprus, not peace. The situation remained subject to sudden tensions, generated by events outside the island as well as within. In that connection, relations between Greece and Turkey were particularly important.

The Secretary-General expressed concern about the excessive level of armaments and forces in Cyprus, and the rate at which they were being strengthened. He deplored the fact that the Council's call for a reduction in the number of foreign troops and a reduction of defence spending in the Republic of Cyprus had not been heeded. He also noted that no progress had been made on the modest measures, repeatedly called for by the Council, aimed at reducing the confrontation between the two sides along the cease-fire lines.

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The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) yesterday approved a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would condemn all human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia, including "ethnic cleansing", killings, torture, rape, disappearances and forced evictions. It took that action by a vote of 130 in favour to none against, with 14 abstentions. The draft was one of fifteen approved by the Committee yesterday as it concluded its work for the current session.

The Committee approved a draft resolution on human rights in Rwanda, which would have the Assembly condemn those preventing the voluntary repatriation of refugees, and those obstructing humanitarian access in refugee camps. The Assembly would also welcome the establishment of the International Tribunal for Rwanda, and would reaffirm that all persons who had committed genocide and serious violations of international humanitarian law would be held individually responsible. The Government's efforts to restore the rule of law and reconstruct the judicial system would be welcomed, and members of the international community would be invited to provide assistance in support of those efforts.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) today launched a new series of "blue books", with the publication of The United Nations and Apartheid, 1948-1994, an account of South Africa's transformation from the era of apartheid to the establishment of a non-racial democratic government.

The series covers major developments in international relations in which the Organization has played a leading role. Each volume features an introduction by the Secretary-General, a detailed chronology of events, and a comprehensive collection of United Nations documentation and other materials. The latest publication brings together the texts of more than 200 key resolutions, statements and other materials relating to the struggle against apartheid.

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